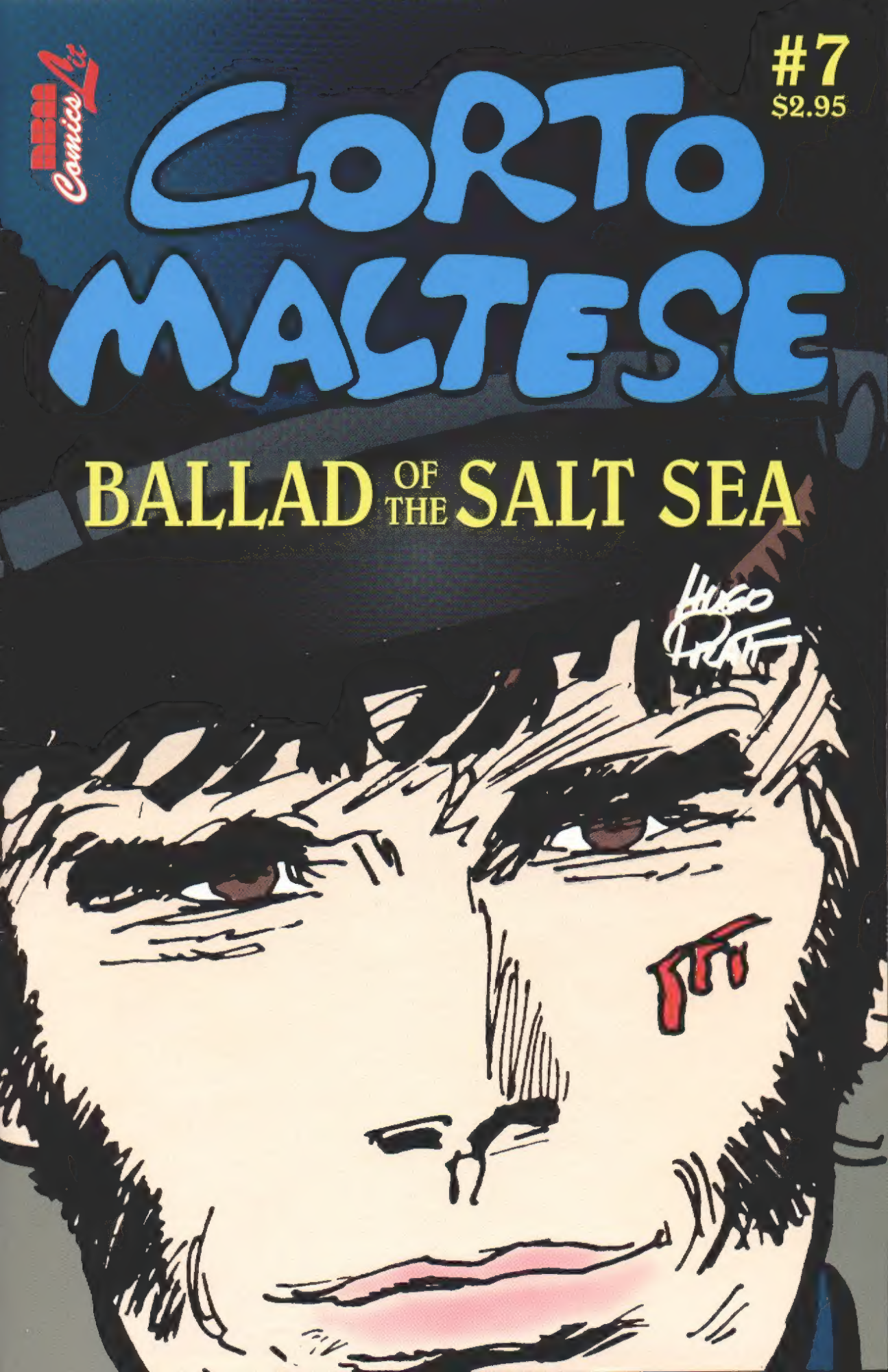

Comics Art
#7
$2.95
CORTO MALTESE
BALLAD OF THE SALT SEA
HUGO PRATT

SUMMARY

The Ballad comes to its conclusion in this final issue of the comic book. The truth has come out as to why The Monk reacted so strongly to seeing Pandora: he was once in love with her mother whom she resembles closely. Meanwhile Rasputin continues to cross and double-cross just about everyone in his quest to wrench away the Monk's treasure. This marks the end of this mini-series. Watch for the Corto movie starring Christopher Lambert, now in production. When that comes out, maybe we'll be back with another Corto mini-series!

©Ed. Casterman 1975
Translation by Ian Monk
©1996 Harvill Press

NBM, 185 Madison Ave., Ste. 1504,
New York, NY 10016
http://www.nbmpub.com

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT. IF CORTO MALTESE HADN'T BEEN THERE, I'D NOW BE ON THE TORPEDO BOAT WITH TAKI JAP.

YES, I KNOW...

BUT I HAD CORTO MALTESE PUT IN PRISON WHEN I LANDED WITH THE EXPEDITIONARY PATROL. HE WAS GOING TO ESCAPE ON RASPUTIN'S YACHT.

IT'S A PITY. BUT I'M GOING TO TRY TO HELP HIM.

A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER...

THAT WILL BE ALL FOR NOW...

SO, THE NATIVES HERE GOT THEMSELVES UNWITTINGLY INVOLVED WITH ADVENTURERS OF THE CALIBRE OF THE MONK, RASPUTIN AND CORTO MALTESE.

FRAZER! THIS NATIVE SAYS THAT THE COMMANDER OF THE SUBMARINE WAS WOUNDED BY THE MONK THEN HIDDEN BY CORTO MALTESE.

SHORTLY...

CORTO MALTESE, YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON TO COME OUT OF THIS STORY WITH ANY CREDIT. CAIN AND PANDORA HAVE TESTIFIED IN YOUR FAVOUR, AND THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED IN ANY ACT OF WAR SINCE THE BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES IS ALSO TO YOUR ADVANTAGE. THAT IS WHY THE ADMIRALTY HAS DECIDED TO BE LENIENT WITH YOU. WE SHALL NOW EXPECT YOUR COLLABORATION...

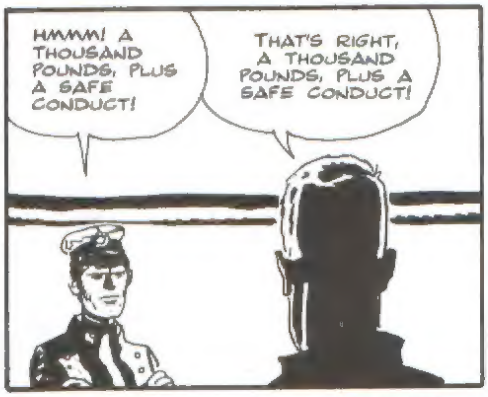
MY COLLABORATION? IN WHAT?

CORTO MALTESE, WE KNOW THAT YOU HAVE HIDDEN THE SUBMARINE COMMANDER, SHIP'S LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER, SOMEWHERE ON THE ISLAND. WHAT WE WANT IS FOR HIM...

...TO BE JUDGED BY A COURT MARTIAL FOR PIRACY AND TREASON. FOR POLITICAL REASONS, WHICH DO NOT CONCERN US HERE, THEY ARE DEMANDING...

...A TRIAL. WE THEREFORE NEED HIM ALIVE. HE WILL BE CONDEMNED ALONG WITH THE OTHER GERMAN OFFICERS CAPTURED ON THE ISLES OF SAMOA. AND YOU...

...ARE THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN APPROACH HIM. WITH YOU, HE WON'T SUSPECT ANYTHING. IN RETURN, YOU WILL RECEIVE ONE THOUSAND POUNDS STERLING AND SAFE CONDUCT TO ANY PLACE OF YOUR CHOICE THAT IS OUTSIDE OUR JURISDICTION.

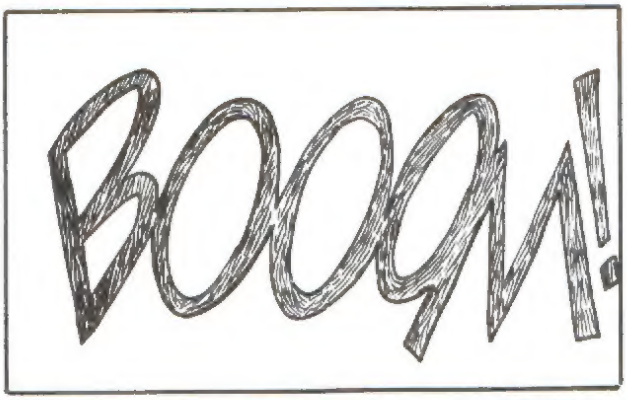

HMMM! A THOUSAND POUNDS, PLUS A SAFE CONDUCT!
THAT'S RIGHT, A THOUSAND POUNDS, PLUS A SAFE CONDUCT!

HO! HO! WE'RE IN A PERIOD OF INFLATION. THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER USED TO DO THE TRICK!
HUGO PRATT

GUARD! TAKE THE PRISONER BACK TO HIS HUT!

I NEARLY SPAT IN THAT CAPTAIN'S EYE!

GOOD HEAVENS!

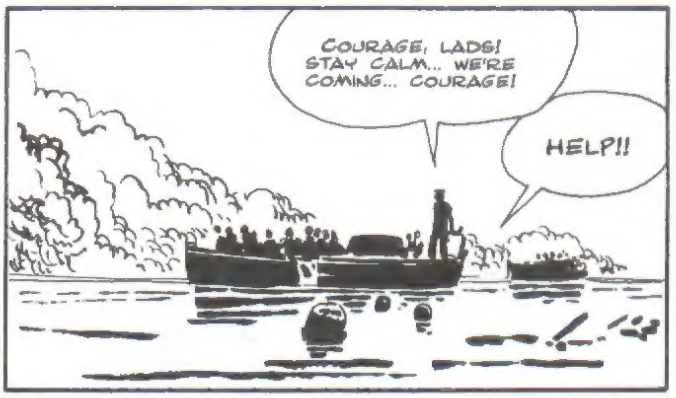

BOOM!

THE "VICTORIA" IS JUST BLOWN UP!

LOOK! THE DESTROYER "VICTORIA" IS GOING DOWN AND THE "SAINTE BARBE" HAS EXPLODED!

IT'S LUCKY THERE WEREN'T MANY PEOPLE ON BOARD!
YES!

THERE GO THE LIFEBOATS. LET'S HOPE THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY CASUALTIES.
WHOEVER CAN HAVE DONE THAT?


COURAGE, LADS! STAY CALM... WE'RE COMING... COURAGE!
HELP!!

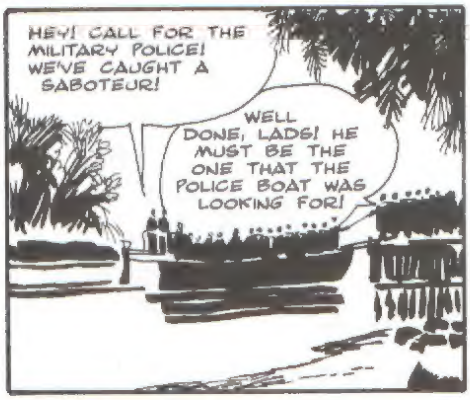
THERE'S ANOTHER ONE... ON THAT DRIFTWOOD!
I'LL STEER TO THE RIGHT.

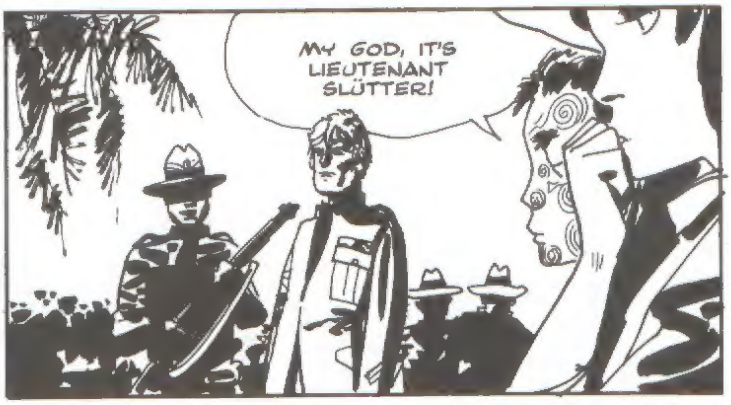
LEAVE ME... LEAVE ME ALONE...
HEY, HE'S GERMAN!

A GERMAN IN AN ENGLISH UNIFORM!

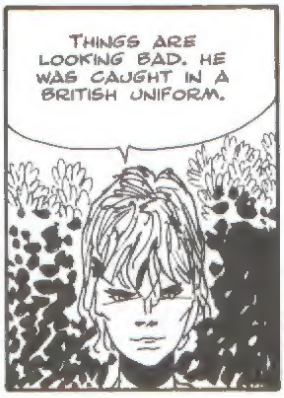
THIS SON OF A BITCH IS A GERMAN!

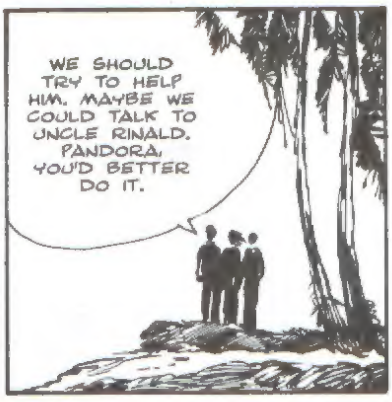
ONE MINUTE, SAILOR! THIS MAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOWING UP THE "VICTORIA". HE SHOULD BE TRIED BEFORE A COURT MARTIAL.
LEAVE HIM TO US AND WE'LL SAVE THE COURTS THE TROUBLE!


HEY! CALL FOR THE MILITARY POLICE! WE'VE CAUGHT A SABOTEUR!
WELL DONE, LADS! HE MUST BE THE ONE THAT THE POLICE BOAT WAS LOOKING FOR!


MY GOD, IT'S LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER!

HE WAS THE ONE THAT BLEW UP THE "VICTORIA"!

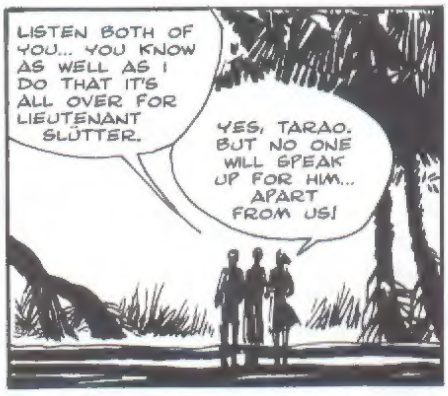

THINGS ARE LOOKING BAD. HE WAS CAUGHT IN A BRITISH UNIFORM.

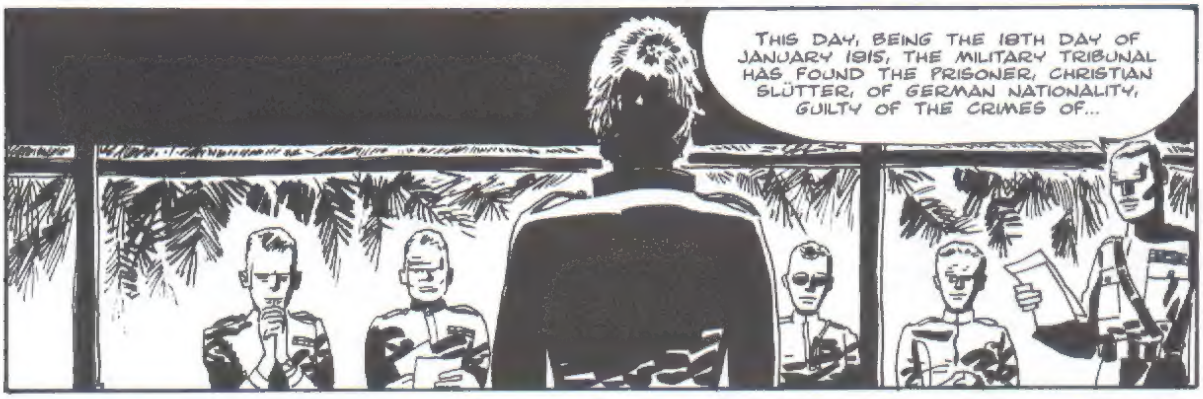

WE SHOULD TRY TO HELP HIM. MAYBE WE COULD TALK TO UNCLE RINALD. PANDORA, YOU'D BETTER DO IT.

NO, THERE'S NO POINT. LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER WAS WELL AWARE OF THE RISK HE WAS TAKING!

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT SLÜTTER IS OUR FRIEND AND I DON'T LIKE TO SEE HIM IN A MESS LIKE THIS!

NEITHER DO I, CAIN. WE WILL DO WHATEVER WE CAN FOR HIM.

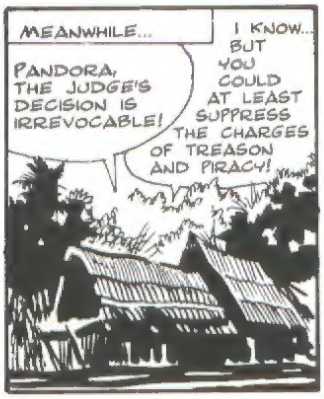

LISTEN BOTH OF YOU... YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT IT'S ALL OVER FOR LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER.
YES, TARAO. BUT NO ONE WILL SPEAK UP FOR HIM... APART FROM US!

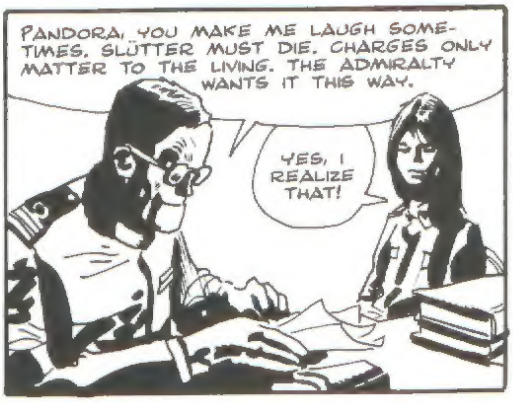

THIS DAY, BEING THE 18TH DAY OF JANUARY 1915, THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL HAS FOUND THE PRISONER, CHRISTIAN SLÜTTER, OF GERMAN NATIONALITY, GUILTY OF THE CRIMES OF...

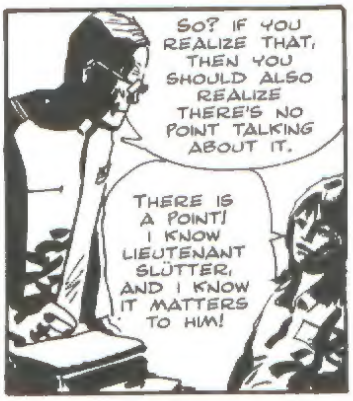
...TREASON, PIRACY, MURDER, SABOTAGE AND ESPIONAGE, AND OF WEARING A NEW ZEALAND UNIFORM. HE IS CONDEMNED TO BE SHOT TOMORROW, JANUARY 19TH 1915, AT ZERO SIX HUNDRED HOURS.

CHRISTIAN SLÜTTER, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?

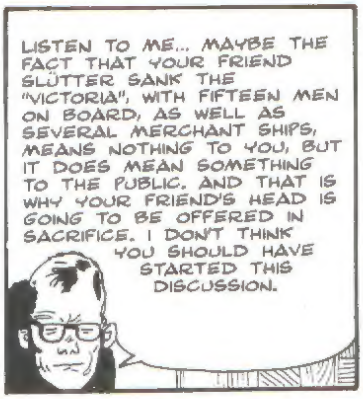
YES. GO TO HELL!

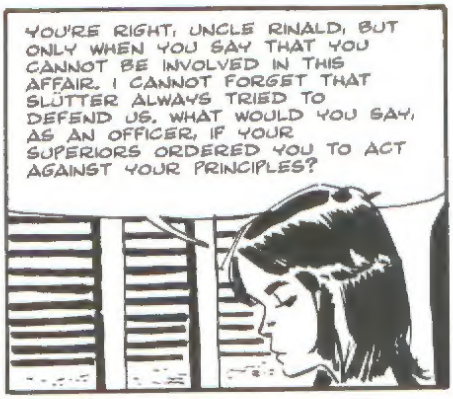

MEANWHILE...
PANDORA, THE JUDGE'S DECISION IS IRREVOCABLE!
I KNOW... BUT YOU COULD AT LEAST SUPPRESS THE CHARGES OF TREASON AND PIRACY!

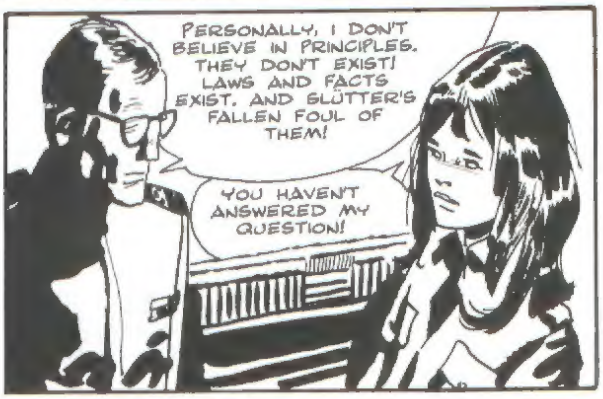

PANDORA, YOU MAKE ME LAUGH SOMETIMES. SLÜTTER MUST DIE. CHARGES ONLY MATTER TO THE LIVING. THE ADMIRALTY WANTS IT THIS WAY.
YES, I REALIZE THAT!


SO? IF YOU REALIZE THAT, THEN YOU SHOULD ALSO REALIZE THERE'S NO POINT TALKING ABOUT IT.
THERE IS A POINT! I KNOW LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER, AND I KNOW IT MATTERS TO HIM!

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? GIVE HIM A NICE BIG KISS, THEN LET HIM GO?
PLEASE DON'T BE SO VULGAR, UNCLE RINALD!


LISTEN TO ME... MAYBE THE FACT THAT YOUR FRIEND SLÜTTER SANK THE "VICTORIA", WITH FIFTEEN MEN ON BOARD, AS WELL AS SEVERAL MERCHANT SHIPS, MEANS NOTHING TO YOU, BUT IT DOES MEAN SOMETHING TO THE PUBLIC. AND THAT IS WHY YOUR FRIEND'S HEAD IS GOING TO BE OFFERED IN SACRIFICE. I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE STARTED THIS DISCUSSION.


YOU'RE RIGHT, UNCLE RINALD, BUT ONLY WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOU CANNOT BE INVOLVED IN THIS AFFAIR. I CANNOT FORGET THAT SLÜTTER ALWAYS TRIED TO DEFEND US. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY, AS AN OFFICER, IF YOUR SUPERIORS ORDERED YOU TO ACT AGAINST YOUR PRINCIPLES?


PERSONALLY, I DON'T BELIEVE IN PRINCIPLES. THEY DON'T EXIST! LAWS AND FACTS EXIST. AND SLÜTTER'S FALLEN FOUL OF THEM!
YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION!

THERE IS NO ANSWER TO YOUR RIDICULOUS QUESTION. IT'S SLÜTTER WHO'S THE CONDEMNED MAN, NOT ME. IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS!

DON'T FORGET THAT HE HELPED US, UNCLE RINALD. JUST SUPPRESS THE CHARGES OF TREASON AND PIRACY!

I CAN'T! ALL I CAN DO IS ALLOW YOU TO SEE HIM!
THANK YOU, UNCLE RINALD.

I HAVE CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE'S PERMISSION TO SEE MR SLÜTTER.
VERY WELL. BUT I MUST WARN YOU THAT THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT!

STEP THIS WAY, MISS GROOVESNORE.

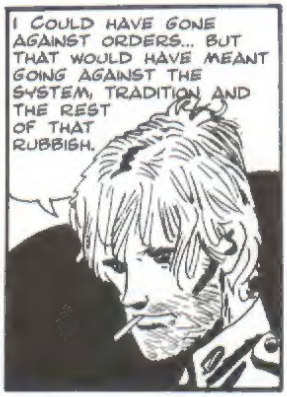
PRISONER SLÜTTER, YOU HAVE A VISITOR.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME FOR IN THAT PITIFUL WAY? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

IF IT'S YOUR UNCLE RINALD THAT'S SENT YOU, HOPING I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I DIDN'T TELL HIM...

NO, HE'S GOT IT WRONG. I KNOW NOTHING... AND IF I DID KNOW ANYTHING I STILL WOULDN'T TALK!

I DON'T LIKE WHAT I'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF, BUT I UNDERSTAND THEIR POSITION...


I COULD HAVE GONE AGAINST ORDERS... BUT THAT WOULD HAVE MEANT GOING AGAINST THE SYSTEM, TRADITION AND THE REST OF THAT RUBBISH.

IT IS TIME, PRISONER SLÜTTER. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE CHAPLAIN?

THAT'S RIGHT. THE CHAPLAIN AS WELL! IT'S ALL PART OF THE SAME GAME! THE BRITISH ARE GOING TO SHOOT ME BECAUSE I OBEYED MY COMMANDER'S ORDERS AND THE GERMANS WOULD HAVE SHOT ME IF I HAD DISOBEYED.

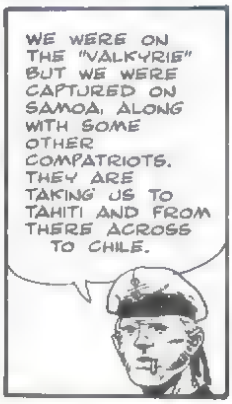
NO PRIESTS! THERE'S NO POINT PROLONGING THIS HYPOCRISY, LIEUTENANT. I AM READY!
I THINK YOU HAD BETTER GO, MISS GROOVESNORE. SEEING A PRISONER BEING TAKEN AWAY IS NOT A PRETTY SIGHT!
I'M STAYING!
PANDORA!

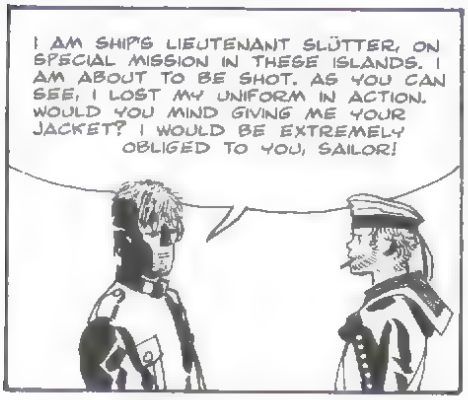
PRISONER SLÜTTER, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY BEFORE THE SENTENCE IS CARRIED OUT?
NO, CAPTAIN!

I MUST TELL YOU THAT CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE HAS SUPPRESSED THE CHARGES OF TREASON AND PIRACY. WOULD YOU LIKE A CIGARETTE?
THANK HIM FOR ME AND GIVE HIM MY REGARDS!

I CAN SEE SOME GERMAN PRISONERS. MAY I SPEAK TO THEM, CAPTAIN?

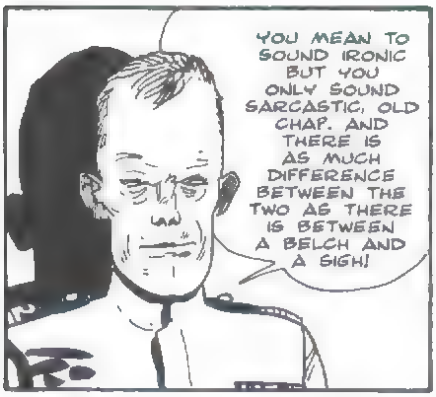
JUST A QUICK WORD. WHERE ARE YOU FROM, SAILORS?

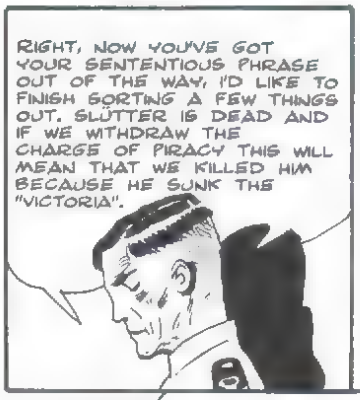

WE WERE ON THE "VALKYRIE" BUT WE WERE CAPTURED ON SAMOA, ALONG WITH SOME OTHER COMPATRIOTS. THEY ARE TAKING US TO TAHITI AND FROM THERE ACROSS TO CHILE.

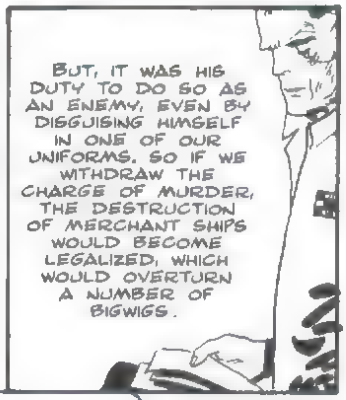

I AM SHIP'S LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER, ON SPECIAL MISSION IN THESE ISLANDS. I AM ABOUT TO BE SHOT. AS YOU CAN SEE, I LOST MY UNIFORM IN ACTION. WOULD YOU MIND GIVING ME YOUR JACKET? I WOULD BE EXTREMELY OBLIGED TO YOU, SAILOR!

SEAMAN BOËKE, MR SLÜTTER! EXCUSE US FOR NOT RECOGNIZING YOU! AND SORRY TO BE USEFUL TO YOU ONLY IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES!

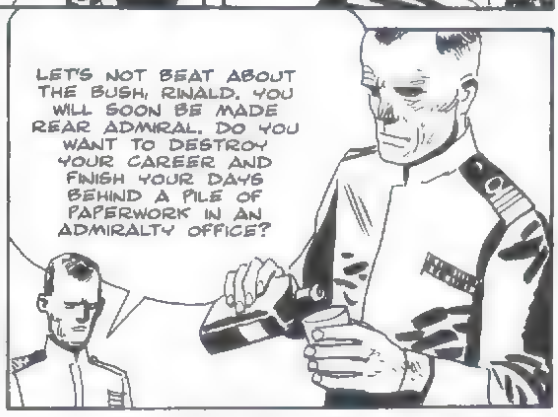
TAKE AIM!
FIRE!
IT'S ALL OVER, GROOVESNORE!
I'M NOT DEAF!
WELL, THE PAPERS HAVE BEEN ALTERED. FROM NOW ON, LIEUTENANT SLUTTER'S GOING TO BE A HERO.


YOU MEAN TO SOUND IRONIC BUT YOU ONLY SOUND SARCASTIC, OLD CHAP. AND THERE IS AS MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO AS THERE IS BETWEEN A BELCH AND A SIGH!


RIGHT, NOW YOU'VE GOT YOUR SENTENTIOUS PHRASE OUT OF THE WAY, I'D LIKE TO FINISH SORTING A FEW THINGS OUT. SLÜTTER IS DEAD AND IF WE WITHDRAW THE CHARGE OF PIRACY THIS WILL MEAN THAT WE KILLED HIM BECAUSE HE SUNK THE "VICTORIA".


BUT, IT WAS HIS DUTY TO DO SO AS AN ENEMY, EVEN BY DISGUISING HIMSELF IN ONE OF OUR UNIFORMS. SO IF WE WITHDRAW THE CHARGE OF MURDER, THE DESTRUCTION OF MERCHANT SHIPS WOULD BECOME LEGALIZED, WHICH WOULD OVERTURN A NUMBER OF BIGWIGS.

. IN THE ADMIRALTY FOR INCOMPETENCE IN THE DEFENCE OF OUR SHIPPING. WE NEED TO OFFER PUBLIC OPINION A GERMAN PIRATE AND NOT ONE OF OUR ADMIRALTY COLLEAGUES. IN ANY CASE, PEOPLE IN HIGHER CIRCLES WOULD NEVER FORGIVE YOU.
TRUE!

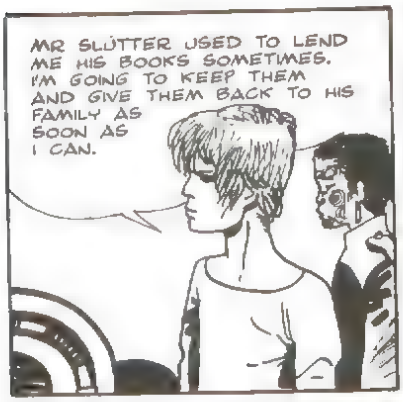

LET'S NOT BEAT ABOUT THE BUSH, RINALD. YOU WILL SOON BE MADE REAR ADMIRAL. DO YOU WANT TO DESTROY YOUR CAREER AND FINISH YOUR DAYS BEHIND A PILE OF PAPERWORK IN AN ADMIRALTY OFFICE?

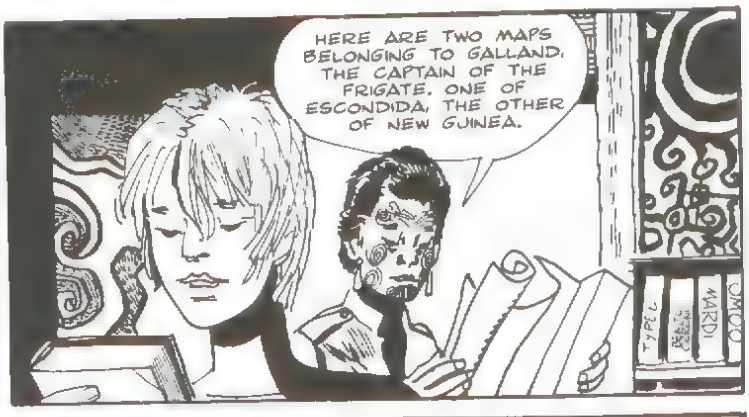
WHAT DO YOU ADVISE ME TO DO?
TO PUT YOUR ROMANTIC SOLDIERLY SCRUPLES TO ONE SIDE AND LEAVE IN THE CHARGES OF PIRACY AND MURDER. HE'S DEAD NOW, ANYWAY. WHAT DOES HE CARE ANY MORE? AT OUR RANK, BEING CHIVALROUS AND ROMANTIC IS A MATTER OF PURE VANITY. WE HAVE MORE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO DEAL WITH.

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.

I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY I MADE SUCH A BLUNDER. THANKS FOR THE ADVICE, OLD CHAP. LET'S HAVE A DRINK.

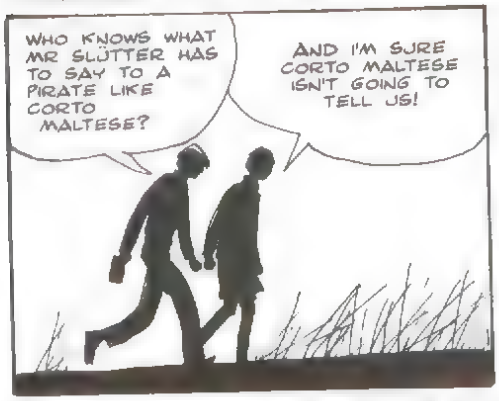
COME ON, TARAO. SLÜTTER LIVED IN THIS HUT. THERE MAY BE SOMETHING WHICH THE MILITARY POLICE HAVEN'T FOUND YET!


MR SLÜTTER USED TO LEND ME HIS BOOKS SOMETIMES. I'M GOING TO KEEP THEM AND GIVE THEM BACK TO HIS FAMILY AS SOON AS I CAN.


HERE ARE TWO MAPS BELONGING TO GALLAND, THE CAPTAIN OF THE FRIGATE. ONE OF ESCONDIDA, THE OTHER OF NEW GUINEA.
TYPEE
MARDI
OMOO

LOOK, CAIN, A LETTER!

IT'S FROM SLUTTER TO CORTO MALTESE!
WE SHOULD GIVE IT TO HIM AT ONCE!

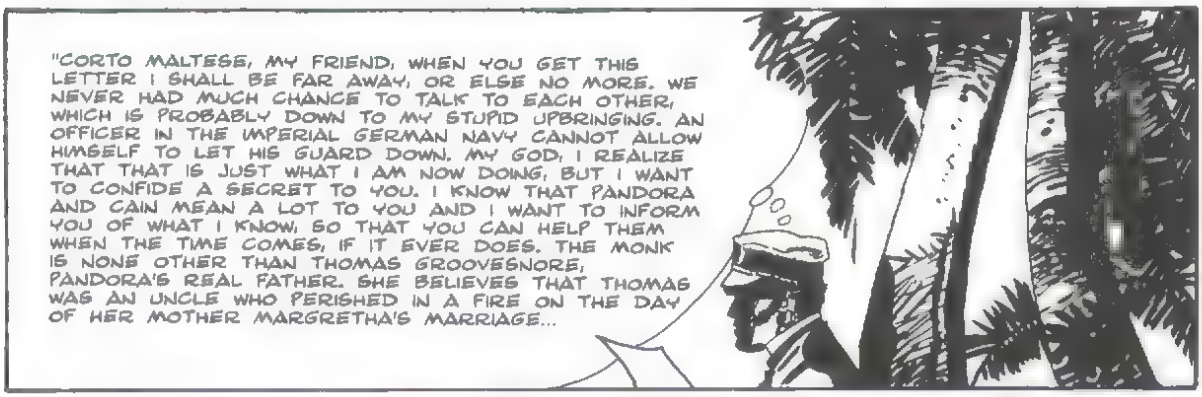

WHO KNOWS WHAT MR SLÜTTER HAS TO SAY TO A PIRATE LIKE CORTO MALTESE?
AND I'M SURE CORTO MALTESE ISN'T GOING TO TELL US!

HELLO THERE, KIDS. I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR A WHILE.
HELLO, CORTO MALTESE. WE FOUND THIS LETTER AMONG MR SLÜTTER'S BOOKS.

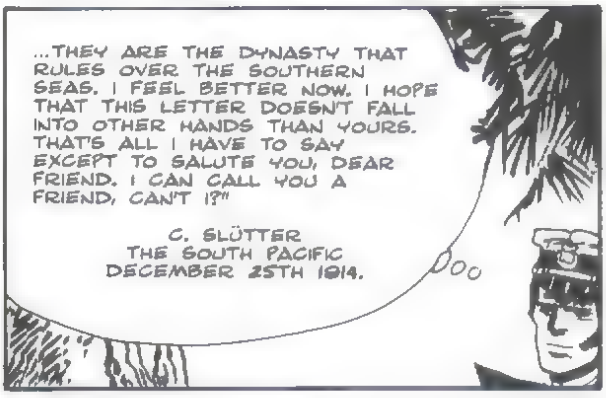
A LETTER FOR ME. FROM SLUTTER?
YES.
157

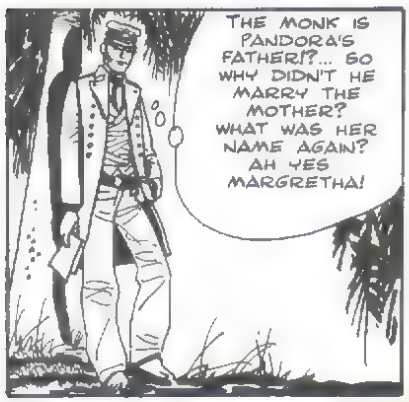
WOULD YOU MIND IF I WENT OFF TO READ IT? WAIT FOR ME HERE.

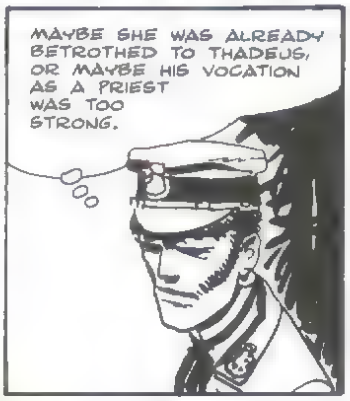
WHATEVER DID THAT POOR LIEUTENANT HAVE TO TELL ME?

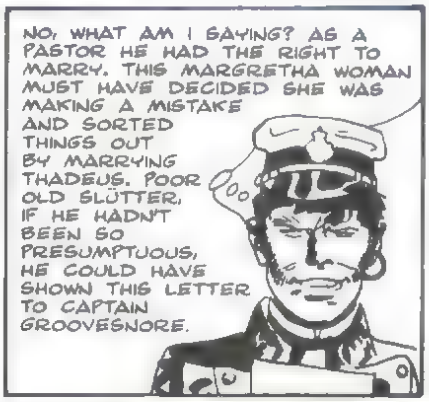

"CORTO MALTESE, MY FRIEND, WHEN YOU GET THIS LETTER I SHALL BE FAR AWAY, OR ELSE NO MORE. WE NEVER HAD MUCH CHANCE TO TALK TO EACH OTHER, WHICH IS PROBABLY DOWN TO MY STUPID UPBRINGING. AN OFFICER IN THE IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVY CANNOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO LET HIS GUARD DOWN. MY GOD, I REALIZE THAT THAT IS JUST WHAT I AM NOW DOING, BUT I WANT TO CONFIDE A SECRET TO YOU. I KNOW THAT PANDORA AND CAIN MEAN A LOT TO YOU AND I WANT TO INFORM YOU OF WHAT I KNOW, SO THAT YOU CAN HELP THEM WHEN THE TIME COMES, IF IT EVER DOES. THE MONK IS NONE OTHER THAN THOMAS GROOVESNORE, PANDORA'S REAL FATHER. SHE BELIEVES THAT THOMAS WAS AN UNCLE WHO PERISHED IN A FIRE ON THE DAY OF HER MOTHER MARGRETHA'S MARRIAGE...

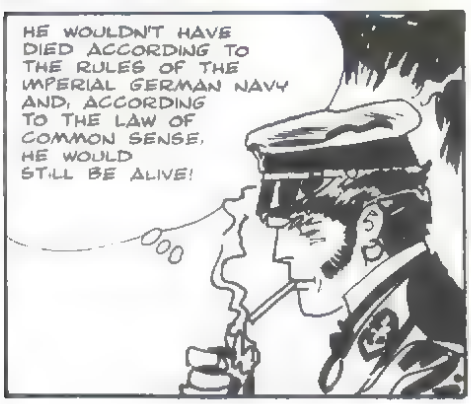
...TO THADEUS GROOVESNORE. THE MAN PANDORA THINKS IS HER FATHER IS ONLY HER UNCLE. I LEARNT THIS ONE DAY WHEN THE MONK WAS RAVING. THAT IS WHY HE WENT MAD THE FIRST TIME HE SAW PANDORA. KNOWING THAT I WAS PARTY TO HIS SECRET, HE DECIDED TO ELIMINATE ME. BEING A GROOVESNORE IS, FOR HIM, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD...


...THEY ARE THE DYNASTY THAT RULES OVER THE SOUTHERN SEAS. I FEEL BETTER NOW. I HOPE THAT THIS LETTER DOESN'T FALL INTO OTHER HANDS THAN YOURS. THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY EXCEPT TO SALUTE YOU, DEAR FRIEND. I CAN CALL YOU A FRIEND, CAN'T I?"
C. SLÜTTER
THE SOUTH PACIFIC
DECEMBER 25TH 1914.


THE MONK IS PANDORA'S FATHER!?... SO WHY DIDN'T HE MARRY THE MOTHER? WHAT WAS HER NAME AGAIN? AH YES MARGRETHA!


MAYBE SHE WAS ALREADY BETROTHED TO THADEUS, OR MAYBE HIS VOCATION AS A PRIEST WAS TOO STRONG.

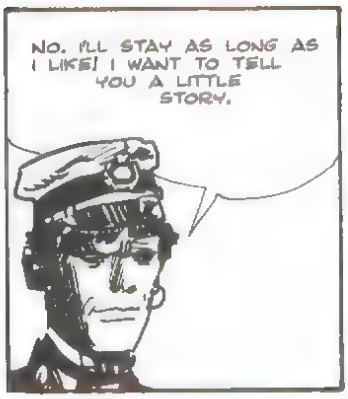

NO, WHAT AM I SAYING? AS A PASTOR HE HAD THE RIGHT TO MARRY. THIS MARGRETHA WOMAN MUST HAVE DECIDED SHE WAS MAKING A MISTAKE AND SORTED THINGS OUT BY MARRYING THADEUS. POOR OLD SLÜTTER, IF HE HADN'T BEEN SO PRESUMPTUOUS, HE COULD HAVE SHOWN THIS LETTER TO CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE.

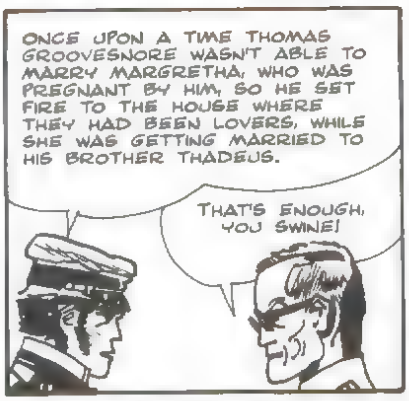

HE WOULDN'T HAVE DIED ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF THE IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVY AND, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF COMMON SENSE, HE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE!

HEY, KIDS! I'M GOING TO SEE CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE. DON'T STRAY TOO FAR. I WANT TO SAY GOODBYE TO YOU BEFORE I LEAVE!

IN CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE'S HUT..
CAPTAIN, I CAME TO TELL YOU THAT IF YOU GIVE ORDERS FOR RASPUTIN'S RELEASE THEN WE'RE READY TO GO!
ARE YOU JOKING, CORTO MALTESE? RASPUTIN IS TO BE SENTENCED SENTENCED TO DEATH!

OH NO HE ISN'T. YOU'VE ALREADY SENTENCED MR SLÜTTER TO DEATH. I THINK THAT WILL BE QUITE ENOUGH!
YOU'RE MAD. GET OUT OF HERE!


NO. I'LL STAY AS LONG AS I LIKE! I WANT TO TELL YOU A LITTLE STORY.

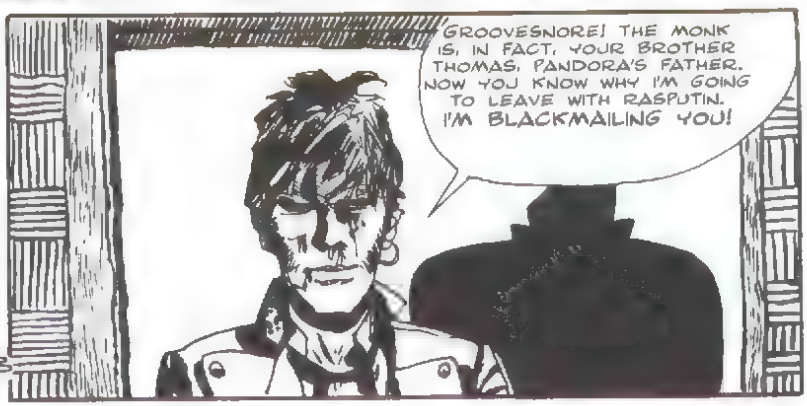

ONCE UPON A TIME THOMAS GROOVESNORE WASN'T ABLE TO MARRY MARGRETHA, WHO WAS PREGNANT BY HIM, SO HE SET FIRE TO THE HOUSE WHERE THEY HAD BEEN LOVERS, WHILE SHE WAS GETTING MARRIED TO HIS BROTHER THADEUS.
THAT'S ENOUGH, YOU SWINE!

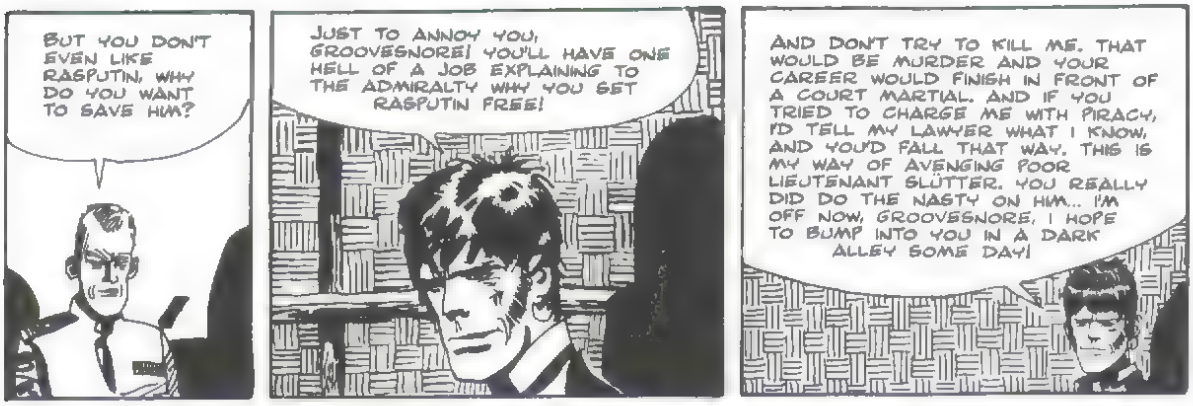
SMACK!

UGH!

YOU DON'T FIGHT FAIR, CORTO MALTESE!

NO, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE ON THE FLOOR!


GROOVESNORE! THE MONK IS, IN FACT, YOUR BROTHER THOMAS, PANDORA'S FATHER. NOW YOU KNOW WHY I'M GOING TO LEAVE WITH RASPUTIN. I'M BLACKMAILING YOU!


BUT YOU DON'T EVEN LIKE RASPUTIN, WHY DO YOU WANT TO SAVE HIM?
JUST TO ANNOY YOU, GROOVESNORE! YOU'LL HAVE ONE HELL OF A JOB EXPLAINING TO THE ADMIRALTY WHY YOU SET RASPUTIN FREE!
AND DON'T TRY TO KILL ME. THAT WOULD BE MURDER AND YOUR CAREER WOULD FINISH IN FRONT OF A COURT MARTIAL. AND IF YOU TRIED TO CHARGE ME WITH PIRACY, I'D TELL MY LAWYER WHAT I KNOW, AND YOU'D FALL THAT WAY. THIS IS MY WAY OF AVENGING POOR LIEUTENANT SLUTTER. YOU REALLY DID DO THE NASTY ON HIM... I'M OFF NOW, GROOVESNORE, I HOPE TO BUMP INTO YOU IN A DARK ALLEY SOME DAY!

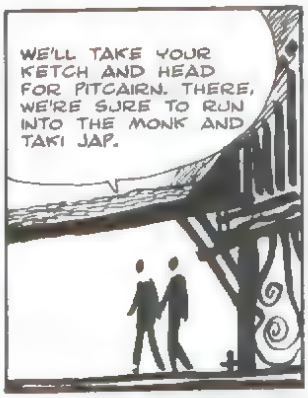
HEY! ANGEL EYES! YOU AND I ARE LEAVING TODAY. FOR GOOD!
HMMM

LISTEN, RASPUTIN, I DIDN'T SAVE YOUR SKIN FOR YOUR SAKE, BUT TO GIVE THE CAPTAIN SOME EXPLAINING TO DO. SO DO WHAT I SAY AND THAT'S THE END OF IT!
OKAY, CORTO MALTESE. I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WANT. YOU KNOW I LIKE YOU REALLY. I'LL NEVER FORGET

.WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR ME. NO, DON'T SAY A WORD! I OWE YOU MY LIFE AND I GIVE YOU MY WORD THAT YOU'LL NEVER BE SORRY TO HAVE ME AS YOUR BEST FRIEND.
ARE YOU GOING SOFT IN THE HEAD? I'D RATHER HAVE A TARANTULA FOR A FRIEND!
AH! CORTO, CORTO! DON'T BE LIKE THAT! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOSING BY REFUSING MY FRIENDSHIP.

ALL RIGHT, RAS. WHAT MATTERS IS GETTING OUT OF HERE TODAY. BEFORE GROOVESNORE CHANGES HIS MIND!

YOU NEVER CAN TELL WITH OFFICERS. FIRST THEY SAY ONE THING, THEN THEY DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

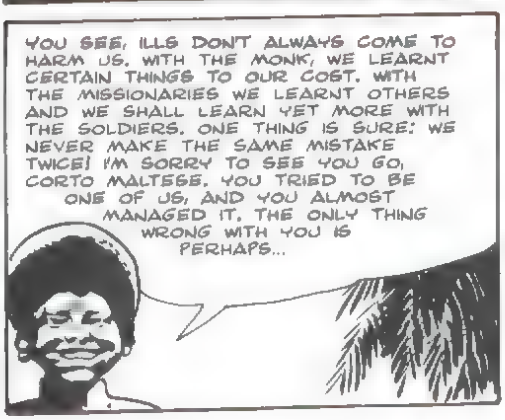

WE'LL TAKE YOUR KETCH AND HEAD FOR PITCAIRN. THERE, WE'RE SURE TO RUN INTO THE MONK AND TAKI JAP.

GET EVERYTHING READY SO THAT WE CAN LEAVE AT LOW TIDE. I'M GOING TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO THE CHILDREN.

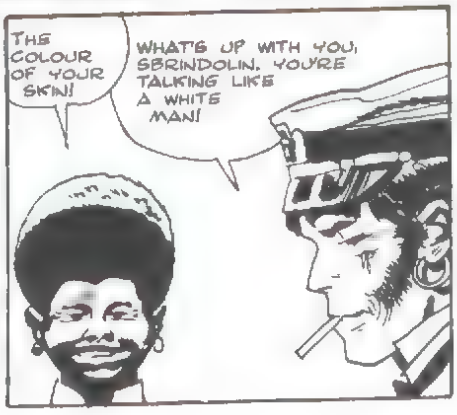
THIS ISLAND JUST ISN'T THE SAME WITH ALL THESE SOLDIERS!

SBRINDOLIN! I'VE COME TO SAY GOODBYE. I'M TAKING RASPUTIN WITH ME. I HOPE EVERYTHING GOES WELL!

IT WILL BE HARD WITHOUT CRANIO, BUT I'M SURE YOU'LL MANAGE. WATCH OUT FOR ALL THESE SOLDIERS!
THAT'S NOTHING NEW, CORTO...

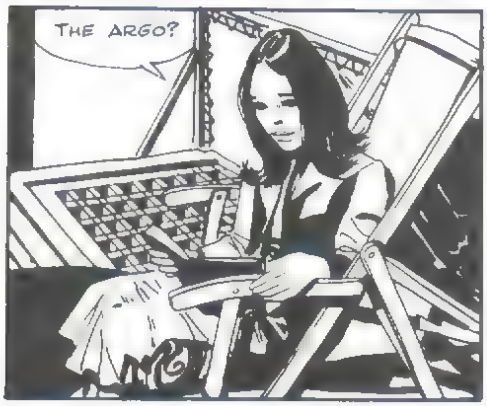

YOU SEE, ILLS DON'T ALWAYS COME TO HARM US. WITH THE MONK, WE LEARNT CERTAIN THINGS TO OUR COST. WITH THE MISSIONARIES WE LEARNT OTHERS AND WE SHALL LEARN YET MORE WITH THE SOLDIERS. ONE THING IS SURE: WE NEVER MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE! I'M SORRY TO SEE YOU GO, CORTO MALTESE. YOU TRIED TO BE ONE OF US, AND YOU ALMOST MANAGED IT. THE ONLY THING WRONG WITH YOU IS PERHAPS...

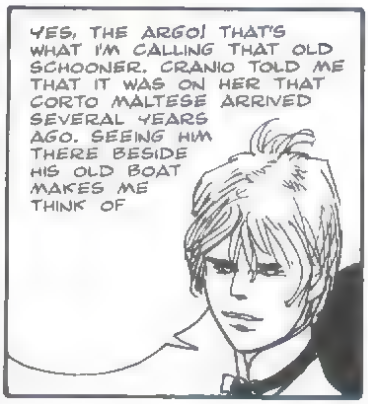
OH YES? WHAT'S THAT?


THE COLOUR OF YOUR SKIN!
WHAT'S UP WITH YOU, SBRINDOLIN. YOU'RE TALKING LIKE A WHITE MAN!

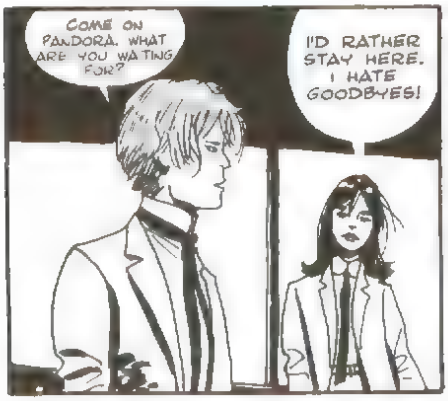
FAREWELL, CORTO MALTESE! COME BACK WHENEVER YOU LIKE!
WHO KNOWS. MAYBE WE WILL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. FAREWELL, SBRINDOLIN!

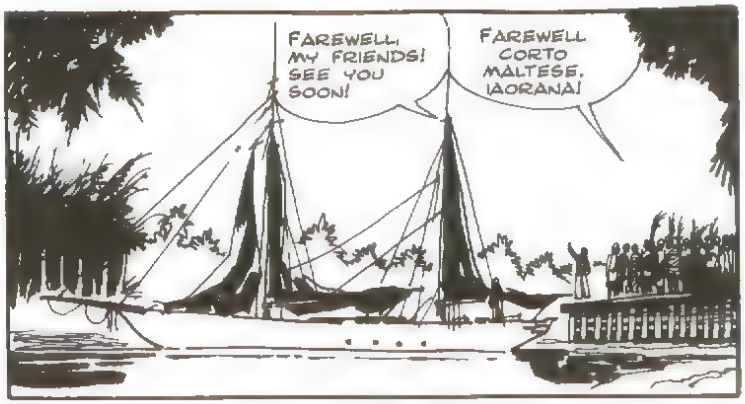
ON THE DECK OF THE DESTROYER.
WHAT'S HE DOING?
HE'S STOPPED BESIDE AN OLD WRECK.. THE ARGO!


THE ARGO?


YES, THE ARGO! THAT'S WHAT I'M CALLING THAT OLD SCHOONER. CRANIO TOLD ME THAT IT WAS ON HER THAT CORTO MALTESE ARRIVED SEVERAL YEARS AGO. SEEING HIM THERE BESIDE HIS OLD BOAT MAKES ME THINK OF

..JASON WEEPING ON HIS OWN FOR THE ARGO, HIS SHIP PULLED UP DRY IN A FOREST. THERE'S A BEAUTIFUL PASSAGE IN EURIPIDES' "MEDEA". CORTO MALTESE IS LIKE JASON AND THE "THREE WEDDED NUNS", THAT'S THE WRECK'S REAL NAME, IS LIKE THE ARGO. NOW, PANDORA, LET'S GO AND SHAKE HIS HAND.


COME ON PANDORA. WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
I'D RATHER STAY HERE. I HATE GOODBYES!

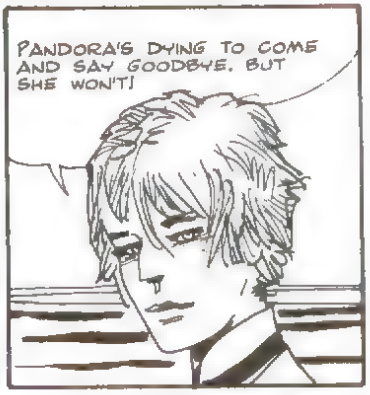

FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS! SEE YOU SOON!
FAREWELL CORTO MALTESE. IAORANA!

FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS, FAREWELL!
YOU'RE SORRY YOU'RE GOING, AREN'T YOU? ME TOO. IT'S SAD TO LEAVE SO MANY FRIENDS!

CORTO! CORTO MALTESE!
CAIN!

IT SEEMS THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO SAY GOODBYE.

THAT'S RIGHT, CAIN. I'M GOING NOW.
OH WELL!


PANDORA'S DYING TO COME AND SAY GOODBYE. BUT SHE WON'T!

WHERE IS SHE?
ON THE DESTROYER.

HEY! ROMANTIC PETAL!

HELLO, CORTO MALTESE!

WELL, HOW PRETTY YOU ARE! YOU REMIND ME OF AN AROLA TANGO I USED TO LISTEN TO IN THE "PARDA FLORA" NIGHT CLUB IN BUENOS AIRES.
PERHAPS THERE WAS SOMEONE THERE LIKE ME?

NO, THERE'S NO ONE QUITE LIKE YOU. AND THAT'S JUST WHY I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU AGAIN ALWAYS... AND EVERYWHERE..

I'M NOT COMING WITH YOU, CORTO MALTESE!

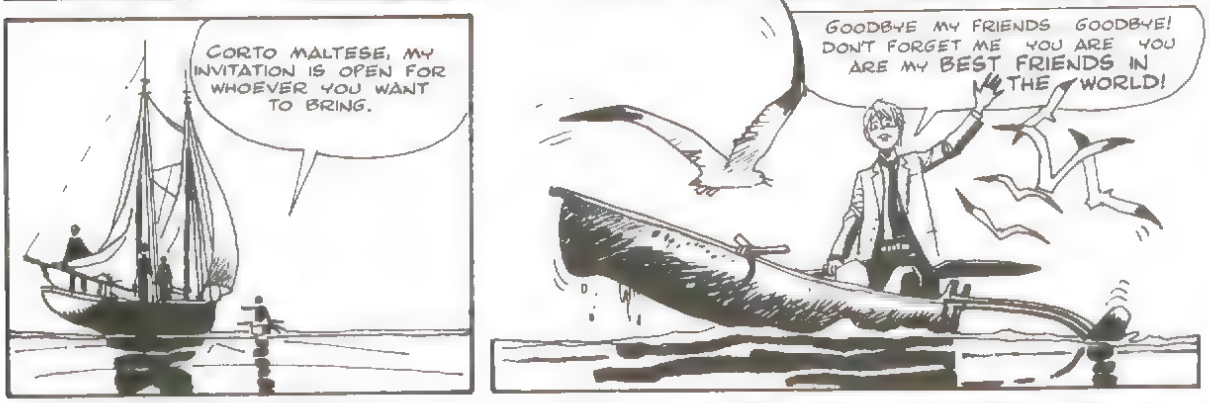
NO, I KNOW!

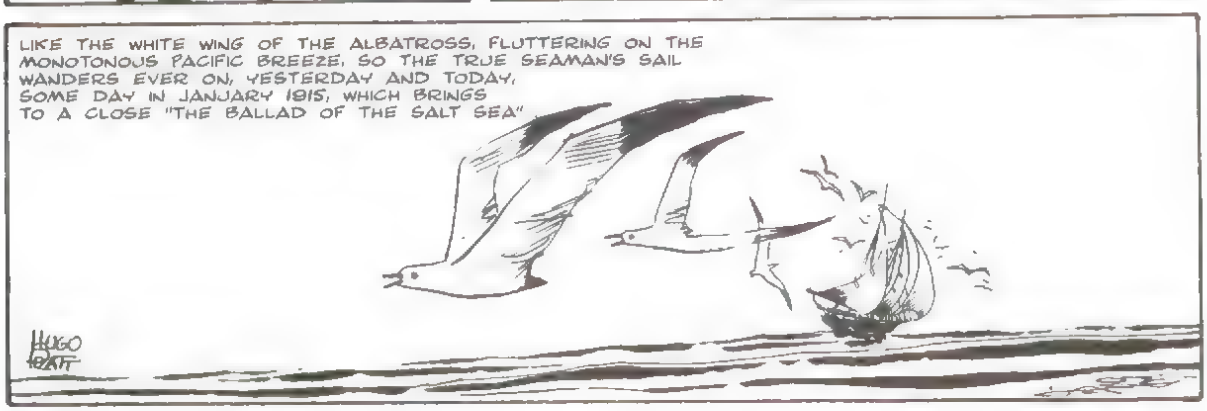
FAREWELL, PANDORA!

FAREWELL, CORTO MALTESE!

CORTO MALTESE, CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
OF COURSE, TARAO!
I'D LIKE TO COME WITH YOU ON THE KETCH AND .
I WAS THINKING OF ASKING YOU, TARAO. BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO FORCE YOUR HAND. I'M GLAD YOU'RE COMING WITH ME. YOU'RE THE BEST NAVIGATOR I KNOW. COME ABOARD!

FAREWELL, CAIN!
WHY FAREWELL?
WE LIVE IN A BIG HOUSE IN CAPE COD WITH A BIG FRONT DOOR. YOU CAN'T MISS IT.


CORTO MALTESE, MY INVITATION IS OPEN FOR WHOEVER YOU WANT TO BRING.
GOODBYE MY FRIENDS GOODBYE! DON'T FORGET ME YOU ARE YOU ARE MY BEST FRIENDS IN THE WORLD!

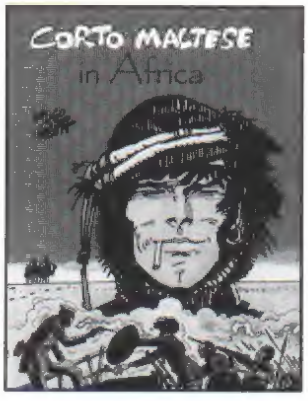

LIKE THE WHITE WING OF THE ALBATROSS, FLUTTERING ON THE MONOTONOUS PACIFIC BREEZE, SO THE TRUE SEAMAN'S SAIL WANDERS EVER ON, YESTERDAY AND TODAY, SOME DAY IN JANUARY 1915, WHICH BRINGS TO A CLOSE "THE BALLAD OF THE SALT SEA".
HUGO PRATT

CORTO MALTESE

CORTO MALTESE
Pratt

Corto Maltese, adventurer, sailor, world traveller, witness and participant in a time of sweeping change: the first thirty years of this century. One of the world's best known and best loved series.

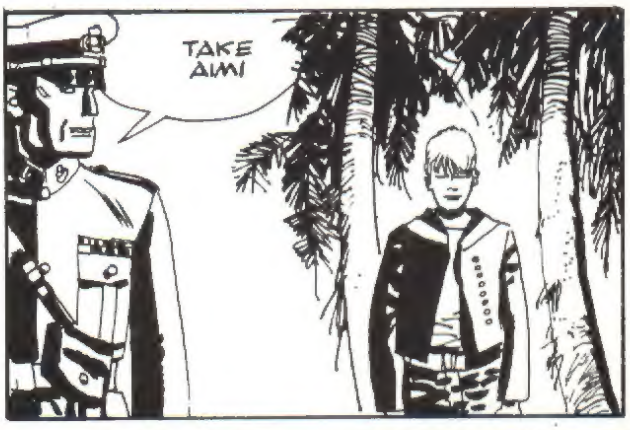
Each a separate story, 8½x 11, color covers:
The Brazilian Eagle, 96pp., B&W, sold out
Banana Conga, 96pp., B&W, $8.95
ISBN 0-918348-19-6
Voodoo for the President, 96pp., B&W, $8.95
ISBN 0-918348-25-0
A Midwinter Morning's Dream, 112pp., B&W, $8.95
ISBN 0-918348-29-3
In Africa, 96pp., B&W, $8.95
ISBN 0-918348-38-2
The Early Years, full color, 48pp., $8.95
ISBN 0-918348-48-X
In Siberia, 128pp., B&W, $10.95
ISBN 0-918348-57-9
Fable of Venice, 80 pp., B&W, $10.95,
ISBN 0-918348-96-X



At your comic bookstore now or from

NBM, 185 Madison Ave., Ste. 1504
New York, NY 10016
(add $3 P&H 1st item, $1 each addt'l)

See our new website:
http://www.nbmpub.com


TAKE AIM!

FIRE!

IT'S ALL OVER, GROOVESNORE!

I'M NOT DEAF!
WELL, THE PAPERS HAVE BEEN ALTERED. FROM NOW ON, LIEUTENANT SLUTTER'S GOING TO BE A HERO.